

Opening delayed

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dictability. The school committee will have met again by the time you read this edition of the *Shrewsbury School Journal* and it is my sincere hope that no additional delays will be needed for the school to open safely for our 7th and 8th graders. I will communicate by mail with parents by August 23rd and will notify the local press

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also so that all residents will be apprised of the status of the Oak Middle School's opening and completion. In the meantime, we are posting updates on the school department's website. Feel free to visit our webpage for more information.

Finally, it will be wise for all of us to focus on the big picture of a wonderful and newly renovated school that will serve students and faculty for many years. While there is no doubt about the inconvenience that will be borne by those who work and learn at the Oak Middle School in the weeks ahead, it is also true that they will be the direct beneficiaries of a great new facility with fresh classroom spaces, new furniture, wireless technology, an expanded media center, and redesigned cafeteria. I look forward to the re-opening of this facility and the district reconfiguration we have been planning for several years.



PHOTO BY BOB CORNACCHIOLI

The principal's office at Oak Middle School.

Shrewsbury School Journal

Communications Committee

The non-profit *Shrewsbury School Journal* is published three times a year and reaches every household in the diverse and growing town of Shrewsbury. It is published by the central office of the Shrewsbury Public Schools with the help and expertise of many individuals. The mission of the *Shrewsbury School Journal* is to provide an accurate source of information about our school system and the town in which we live. We hope to foster a community of continuous learners.

Anthony J. Bent
Superintendent

Judith Evans
Assistant Superintendent

Dawna Alphonse
Project Coordinator

Middle School student leadership benefits many

PAM FARRILL

Oak Street Middle School Assistant Principal

One might think that within a school setting leadership comes from the adults only. That is not so at the Shrewsbury Middle School. Since the fall of 2003 thirty-six sixth, seventh, and eighth grade volunteer students from the Student Leadership Team have proven that young adolescents are leaders, too.

Working with Principal Stephen Lobban and Assistant Principal Pamela Farrill, these students have demonstrated their desire to create a more positive welcoming community. Students willingly gave their time at meetings, day and night, to address issues of bullying and disrespect. The Student Leadership Team spoke to high school administration, the middle school PTO, the high school National Honor Society and other members of the community to define ways to help all constituents develop greater respect and appreciation for one another. From this work the National Honor Society became mentors to the 8th grade students and all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders participated in a "No Name Calling" week focused on enhancing appreciation of diversity.

Throughout the spring the true leadership skills of the Student Leadership Team came to light during the production of the Annual Shrewsbury Middle School Talent Show. With Sushmitha Rajeevan overseeing the operations, each of the fifteen 8th grade members led a designated committee with the assistance of the 6th and 7th grade members. From auditions, stage management, sound-light-curtains, and teacher chaperones to tickets, publication and programming, the Student Leadership Team took full ownership of this event. From the opening curtain to the finale, all went smoothly, a credit to excellent student leadership and management. In reference to the enormity of the tasks that had to be completed, 8th grader Priya Misra noted, "We learned to coordinate with others and to work with each other so all the things could get done on time."

Asked what she had learned from her Student Leadership Team experience, Sushmitha commented, "We have a lot of potential. We can do so much by ourselves. We learned we have a lot of leadership."

In addition to providing over 700 audience members a wonderful night of en-

tertainment, the Talent Show proceeds will be disseminated to support worthy causes and promote continued leadership. From the \$2700 profits, the SLT chose to donate \$1000 to the Middle School Debate Team to support out of district transportation to tournaments. The students felt that the debate team would become stronger and more skilled if they were able to participate in more events.

The SLT has also chosen to donate \$1200 to the "Free the Children Fund" where the money will support hiring one teacher for a full year in an impoverished country such as Haiti. Asked why the Students Leadership Team chose this charity Wajida Syed replied, "Education is knowledge and power and control over oneself. Education is the only way to free these children who live in third world countries that don't value or offer an education to them. If we can help them get an education then they can be in school and not being used for child labor. This way we are helping to free the children."

With the final \$500, the SLT has chosen to establish a "Student Leadership Scholarship." The first award will be made in June 2008 when the current 8th graders from this team will graduate. Each year it is anticipated that the fund will grow so as to award a \$1000 scholarship to the grad-



PHOTO BY DAWNA ALPHONSE

Back row: Jeff Rozak, Christina Ouellette, Wajida Syed, Ginana Padavano, Hannah Beckmann, Brianna Donahue, Teresa Kuruvilla, Mike Powers, middle row: Pam Farrill, Prerna Singh, Linda Chen, Colleen Blanchard, Sush Piajeevan, front row: Priya Misra, Alex Binder, Kristen Pasquale and Mickey Armenti

Elizabeth Schaper joins Oak Street team

DR. STEPHEN LOBBAN
OAK STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Elizabeth Schaper has joined the Administrative Team of the Oak Middle School with, in her own words, "an intense resonance with my own beliefs and the philosophy of education guiding Shrewsbury's Middle Level Program."

A broad base of successful middle level experience, affable demeanor in working with students and adults, scholarly intellect and the wisdom of being a parent of three children ages 4, 6 and 8 were all attributes cited by students, faculty, parents and administration in the process of selecting Elizabeth Schaper as Oak Middle School's Assistant Principal.

In the fall "Beth's" responsibility will be to serve as the seventh grade Assistant Principal. In this capacity she will invest her thirteen years of varied teaching experience at the middle and high school levels working with regular and special education students in the Worcester Public Schools. Her expertise as a Profession-



PHOTO BY BRITTANY ALPHONSE, STUDENT

Elizabeth Schaper

al Development Coordinator helping Sullivan Middle School teachers apply best middle level practices in their own classrooms will also be invaluable.

Beth's professional interests and

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uating senior who has demonstrated leadership throughout his or her Shrewsbury Public School experience.

When asked of her impressions of this year's Student Leadership Team Assistant Principal Farrill commented, "Middle level years can be so difficult for students. They are continually being told they are too young to do one thing and too old to do another. I couldn't be more proud of all of these students this year."

They have worked so hard and made such mature decisions regarding these allocations. They have proven that you don't have to wait to become a leader tomorrow. You can do it today and they all have."

demonstrated competencies in promoting the academic success of the middle school learner, mathematics instruction that emphasizes "deep conceptual understanding", meeting the needs of under-achieving readers and writers, professional development of beginning teachers and involvement in creating small learning communities in large schools make her an excellent match for the short and long term needs of Shrewsbury's middle level program.

The words from Beth's cover letter making application for this position perhaps best define her beliefs and commitment to the young people the Oak Middle School will serve in the years ahead: "I'm at a juncture in my career where I am ready to make a solid and lengthy commitment to a school district interested in innovation and dedication to creating safe, nurturing and joyful schools for young adolescents."

We are indeed fortunate that Beth Schaper has decided to become a part of our community.